

Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 SSO-00 EUR-12 /027 W

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FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9491

UNCLAS KARACHI 0047

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN

SUBJ: CORRESPONDENCE WITH ATTORNEY MICHAEL GOTTSCHALK

REF: STATE 001503

1. CONGEN OM DATED OCT. 30, 1974, SENT DEPT. (SCA), NO TAGS. ATTACHMENTS TO OM CONSISTED OF FEDERAL COURT DOCUMENTS RELATING TO CASE INVOLVING MR. AND MRS. JOSE O. VERGARAS (U.S. CITIZENS - PLAINTIFFS) AND AEROFLOT "SOVIET AIRLINES" (DEFENDANT). COVERING LETTER REQUESTED CONSULAR OFFICER, MR. DAVID E. THURMAN, ASSISTANCE IN RECALLING EVENTS OF JULY 19, 1973, DURING INCIDENT AT KARACHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INVOLVING MR. AND MRS. VERGARAS.

2. FOLLOWING IS PERTINENT EXTRACT FROM TEXT OF CONGEN'S OM:
"ON JULY 19, 1973, THE DATE OF THE INCIDENT, MR. THURMAN WAS CONGEN DUTY OFFICER AND, AFTER HOURS (C. 2130 HRS.) WAS NOTIFIED BY THE CONGEN RECEPTIONIST OF SUBJECT'S PRESENCE AT KARACHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. MR. THURMAN WENT TO THE AIRPORT IN AN EFFORT TO ASSIST THE STRANDED AMCITS AND TOOK THE FOLLOWING ACTION:

A) UPON ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT FOUND SUBJECTS DETAINED BY PAKISTANI IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSIT LOUNGE OF THE MAIN TERMINAL WHERE THEY WERE INTERVIEWED. THEY INFORMED THE CONSULAR OFFICER THAT THEY WERE BEING "DETAINED" AND FORCED TO RETURN TO THE SOVIET UNION AS THE AEROFLOT FLIGHT THAT TRANSPORTED THEM TO KARACHI DID NOT HAVE AUTHORITY TO DISCHARGE PASSENGERS. THEY HAD DEBARKED FROM AEROFLOT "SEVERAL HOURS EARLIER", BUT HAD NOT INFORMED THE CONGEN UNTIL THEIR POSITION HAD APPEARED "HOPELESS" THEY EXPLAINED THAT THE REASON THEY HAD NOT STUCK TO THEIR ORIGINAL

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ROUTE OF FLIGHT WAS DUE TO AEROFLOT CANCELLING THEIR SCHEDULED STOP

IN KABUL BECAUSE OF POLITICAL DISTURBANCES WHICH HAD CAUSED CLOSURE OF THE AIRPORT THERE. (NOTE: THIS WAS DUE TO A COUP WHICH WAS IN PROGRESS IN AFGHANISTAN AT THE TIME). FURTHER, THEIR U.S. PASSPORTS WERE BEING HELD BY PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES PENDING AEROFLOT RETURNING THEM TO THE SOVIET UNION.

B) THE CONSULAR OFFICER CONTACTED AEROFLOT PERSONNEL AND DETERMINED THAT THEY WERE POWERLESS TO ASSIST SUBJECTS AND WOULD BE FORCED TO PLACE THEM ON NEXT FLIGHT BACK TO THE SOVIET UNION.

C) CONSULAR OFFICER CONTACTED CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES AT THE AIRPORT AND ASCERTAINED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION WAS THE ONLY PERSON WHO HAD THE AUTHORITY TO ALLOW SUBJECTS TO CONTINUE THEIR ROUND THE WORLD JOURNEY.

D) CONSULAR OFFICER TELEPHONED THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION AND OBTAINED HIS ORAL CONSENT TO ALLOW SUBJECTS TO CONTINUE THEIR ONWARD JOURNEY. IN ADDITION, THE CONSULAR OFFICER CO-ORDINATED THE DIRECTOR'S DECISION WITH AIRPORT AUTHORITIES AND SECURED RELEASE OF SUBJECTS' PASSPORTS FROM PAKISTANI IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES.

E) CONSULAR OFFICER ASSISTED SUBJECTS IN OBTAINING TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS ON AN EASTBOUND AIR FRANCE FLIGHT FOR THEIR ONWARD TRAVEL (THEY DID NOT HAVE TICKETS OR RESERVATIONS OUT OF KARACHI AS THEIR ORIGINAL ROUTING DID NOT INCLUDE KARACHI AS A STOPOVER).

F) CONSULAR OFFICER ASSISTED SUBJECTS IN OBTAINING THEIR BAGGAGE FROM CUSTOMS (ONLY TO DISCOVER FROM SUBJECTS THAT CERTAIN UNIDENTIFIED ARTICLES WERE MISSING FROM THEIR LUGGAGE, BUT AS THEIR FLIGHT DEPARTURE WAS IMMINENT, NO COMPLAINT COULD BE LODGED IN KARACHI).

G) CONSULAR OFFICER HELPED SUBJECTS SECURE GROUND TRANSPORTATION TO THE AWAITING AIR FRANCE AIRCRAFT AND BID THEM FAREWELL. NO OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE WAS PREPARED OR NEEDED EXCEPT A MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD WHICH WAS PLACED IN CONSULAR FILES (COPY OF WHICH CANNOT BE LOCATED).

THE ABOVE REPRESENTS THE CONSULAR OFFICER'S RECOLLECTION OF EVENTS ON THE NIGHT OF 18 JULY 1975. IT IS REQUESTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT REVIEW THE FACTS AS PRESENTED ABOVE AND IN THE ATTACHMENTS AND ADVISE AN APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION."
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